



THE HISTORICAL BACKDROP OF JUDGES

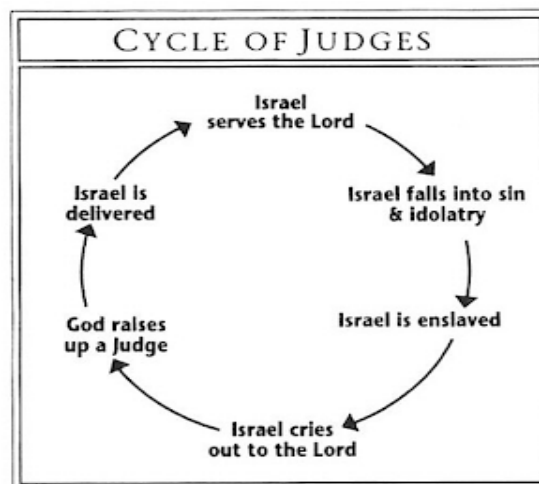
The text of Judges does not indicate who wrote the book, but Jewish tradition favors the prophet Samuel as the author. Samuel was the last of the judges, whom God raised up during this time period to rescue His people. The judges over the nation of Israel were not just judges in our understanding of the role of a judge because while they did oversee legal matters, their work also included overseeing military and administrative authority and tasks as well.

The period of the judges began after the death of Joshua in the early fourteenth century and continued until Saul was king of Israel. The book of Judges is the sequel to the book of Joshua. Events within the book of Judges begin soon after the death of Joshua and end in the years just before the entrance of Samuel onto the scene, a period of about three hundred years.

The book of Judges was not written chronologically. The closing chapters of Judges (chapters 17-21) give the reader an idea of the moral climate during the time period of the judges but the events in the closing chapters actually occurred in the earlier chapters..

During the time period of the judges, the nation of Israel endured political and religious turmoil as the people of God did not choose to fully possess all of the land and territory that God had commanded them to possess as their inheritance. Despite this turmoil, the book of Judges also reveals many judges who were faithful to God.

THE JUDGES CYCLE



***The above cycle is incredibly important and prevalent throughout the book of Judges as the reader is able to see it repeated over and over again.

IS JUDGES RELEVANT FOR DISCIPLES OF JESUS TODAY?

As human beings, it is extremely easy for us to forget and especially forget about God's goodness and faithfulness day in and day out and moment by moment. However, we see throughout the book of Judges and in all of Scripture that remembering how God showed up in the past teaches and inspires us in how we live today. The book of Judges should motivate disciples of Jesus to both remember and claim the promises of God regardless of the difficulties involved in doing both. The book of Judges also shows us what happens when the people of God get comfortable and complacent in the great things that God has provided. The Israelites forgot. The Israelites got both comfortable and complacent and we are not immune from this happening to us today. In the midst of the Israelites forgetting, God did not forget His covenant and His promises to His people. Yes, God did discipline the Israelites, but it was because of His great love and His heart for them that He not only disciplined them but also restored them. The same is true for us today.

JUDGES CHAPTER 1 (FACILITATOR)

Discussion Starter

- What is something that you frequently forget that drives you crazy?
- In what types of circumstances are you most comfortable? Most uncomfortable?
- **Opening Prayer**
 - Ask if someone wants to volunteer before leading the prayer.

Tell the Story

- **PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE ONE PERSON WHO STORIES (SUMMARIZES THE CHAPTER) BEFORE THE GROUP READS THE CHAPTER TOGETHER.**

Read the Story (Judges 1:1-36)

Read out loud as a group, 3-5 verses per person. Let everyone know they can opt out if they would like. **PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU INTRODUCE SOME OF THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE BOOK OF JUDGES AND THE JUDGES CYCLE WITH YOUR GROUP.**

Breaking it Down

- All questions should be utilized as appropriate based upon group dynamics to facilitate both understanding and discussion. Don't feel tied to the questions and don't feel like you have to get through every question. Follow the Spirit's lead! All questions are a matter of perspective in some way BUT there are specific questions that this is truer of and these questions have been indicated to be perspective/opinion questions.

Judges 1:1-18

PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU INTRODUCE SOME OF THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE BOOK OF JUDGES AND THE JUDGES CYCLE WITH YOUR GROUP. THE REPITITION OF THIS STATEMENT IS INTENTIONAL.

- What do we see happening in the first 18 verses of Judges chapter 1? Why is it happening and why is this important to understand?
 - To answer these questions, it is important to go back and read Joshua 23:1-16. God had specifically given His people land and territory that He wanted them and commanded them to possess. This was part of God's covenant with His people. In Joshua 23, this idea is found in some of the last words of Joshua before his death. Additionally, God desired for His people to be set apart from the other nations around them. His people were supposed to be an example, a light and reflection of Him to all of the nations around

them. We see what God desired and commanded unfolding in the first 18 verses of Judges chapter 1 and these events and what happens right after these events greatly impacts the rest of the book of Judges.

- Do you get the impression in the first 18 verses of Judges 1 that it was easy for the Israelites to go and begin to take possession of the land that God had promised and given to them? Why or why not?
 - These are perspective and opinion questions so please listen as the facilitator.
 - What promises has God given you that He desires for you to claim? Is there anything difficult involved in the process of claiming these promises? How do you typically respond when those difficulties arise?
 - These are perspective and opinion questions so please listen as the facilitator.

Judges 1:19-36

- What is the recurring theme/phrase that we see happen in this section of Scripture and why is this important?
 - The recurring theme/phrase is that the nation of Israel “DID NOT DRIVE OUT” all the nations that they were supposed to drive out. More importantly, they did not seek to fully claim the promises that God had made to them. This is important to understand because the rest of the book of Judges hinges on something that may have seemed “small” to the people but that had incredibly destructive results for the entire nation.
 - Why don't you think the Israelites fully drove out the nations before them? In other words, what do you think would have been some of the difficulties involved in doing this?
 - These are perspective and opinion questions so please listen as the facilitator.
 - Consider the following questions.
 - How do you go about remembering the promises that God has made to you?
 - How do you go about claiming the promises that God has given to you?

- Is there anything daunting to you about claiming these promises?
 - These are perspective and opinion questions so please listen as the facilitator.

Final Application

- What does this passage teach us about God?
- What does this passage teach us about mankind?
- What is a command to obey in this passage?
- What has God revealed in your life that needs changing?
- What truth can be applied to your life about the gospel?

Closing & Prayer Requests

- Have a designated person to capture and share (as appropriate) within the life group.
- What happens in life group, stays in life group.
- Don't forget get to confirm the next meeting date and time
- Also recruit someone to do the story for the following week (Judges Chapter 2)



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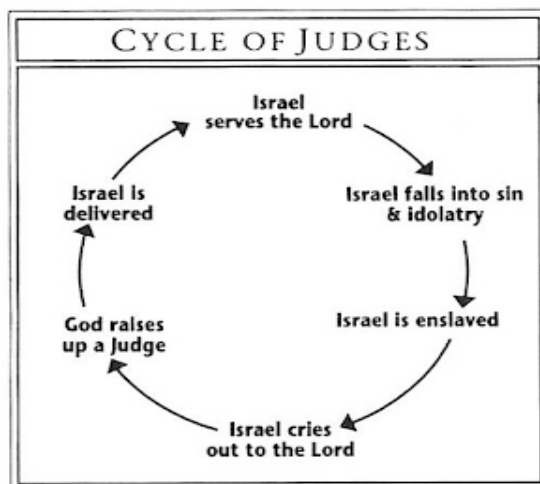
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